

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 7-19, and for identifying claims 2-6 as being allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of their respective base and intervening claims.

Further, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for her consideration during an interview with Applicant's representative, Van C. Ernest, regarding CUNNINGHAM et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,717,717), relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting claims 1 and 20. The Examiner indicated that amending claims 1 and 20 to recite a "sheet" of pressure wrap or stretch wrap would not necessarily render these claims allowable, but rather would require an updated search of the claims.

Accordingly, upon entry of the present amendment, claim 2 will have been canceled, without prejudice and without disclaimer of the subject matter. Claim 1 will have been amended to substantially recite the subject matter of canceled claim 2, and 20 will have been amended to recite that the stretch wrap layer eliminates air from between the insulated wires and the non-rigid sheet of aluminum wrap. Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

In the above-referenced Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over CUNNINGHAM et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,717,717) in view of MCLEOD (U.S. Patent No. 5,684,274). Although Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's rejection, for the purposes of expediting the prosecution process and obtaining a patent, Applicant is accepting the allowed and allowable claims herein.

More particularly, Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite that the sheet of non-rigid

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aluminum material is reinforced, as substantially recited in canceled claim 2. Applicant has amended claim 20 to recite that the stretch wrap layer eliminates air from between the insulated wires and the non-rigid sheet of aluminum wrap, as recited in allowed claim 7. As previously argued by Applicant with respect to claim 7 in the Reply under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, filed July 29, 2004, CUNNINGHAM et al. do not teach or suggest eliminating air from surrounding the cables by shrinking the hollow tube (12) to encase a splice between cables 14 and 16. *See* col. 2, lines 12-24. In fact, CUNNINGHAM et al. expressly admits that air gaps 38, 40, 42 and 44 remain in the shrinkable cable joint. *See* col. 3, lines 22-25. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection based on CUNNINGHAM et al. with respect to claims 1 and 20.

With regard to claims 3-6, Applicant asserts that they are allowable at least because they depend from independent claim 1, which Applicant submits has been shown to be allowable.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attached thereto.

Applicant notes the status of the present application as being an after final rejection and with respect to such status believes that there is a clear basis for the entry of the present amendment consistent with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Applicant notes amendments after final are not entered as a matter of right; however, Applicant submits that the amendment made to the pending claims do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration, as the added limitation are substantially the same as limitations recited in allowable claim 2 and allowed claim 7. It is also submitted that the present

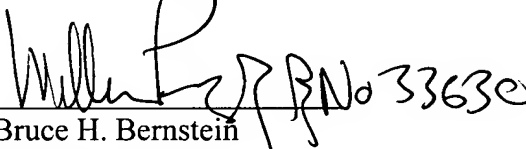
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amendment does not raise the question of new matter. Moreover, the present amendment clearly places the present application in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the present amendment in accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and indication of the allowability of claims 1-20 pending herein. Such action is respectfully requested and is believed to be appropriate and proper.

Should the Examiner have any questions concerning this Reply or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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